

3.0 PROPOSED PROJECT

3.1 Description of the Proposed Project

The Forest Service proposes the following 2 acre parking area addition to the existing Dark Day Boat Launching Facility (Project):

- Construct an additional asphalt-surface parking area for 54 vehicles with trailers and 17 individual vehicles, appropriate striping and barriers and placement of erosion control on the barren soil surfaces created by the construction (Plate 3).

The proposed new parking area is located approximately 500 feet west of the top of the existing Dark Day Boat Launching Facility and existing parking area, and is adjacent to the Dark Day Camping/Picnic Area (Plate 2). Pedestrian access to the launching ramp will be via an existing trail and a newly constructed trail. The new trail will be completed by the Forest Service at the same time the parking area is to be constructed.

3.2 Construction of Project

Construction will entail a fair amount of clearing, grubbing, slash and stump disposal and excavation, as level terrain is scarce throughout the New Bullards Bar Area. Excavation and backfill at the parking area will be accomplished by use of standard earth moving equipment with appropriate erosion control measures. Asphalt concrete will be batched commercially off-site, transported over existing roads and placed with standard equipment.

A specific construction schedule is provided below:

ACTIVITY	DATE
Bid Notice	May 1,2000
Receive and Open Bids	June 1,2000
Evaluate Bids	June 15,2000
Award Contract	July 1,2000
Mobilize	July 15,2000
Demobilize	September 30,2000

4.0 PROPOSED USES

The Dark Day Boat Launching Facility provides convenient access at one of the only two places on New Bullards Bar Reservoir where boat launching can take place, access being limited by steep terrain. New

Bullards Bar Reservoir is currently used for many types of boating and other recreation. Recreation activities include: water skiing, pleasure boating, houseboating, jet skiing, warm and cold water fishing, swimming, lake-side camping, developed camping, sailing, picnicking, hiking, and biking.

Some speed limit restrictions are posted on the reservoir for public safety, near launching facilities, mooring areas, swimming area (Moran Cove), narrow canyons (Upper North Yuba Channel), and for fisheries protection in certain coves.

The Project would provide additional needed parking in a convenient location to the boat ramp. As use data indicates, demand for parking has far exceeded the existing parking area, especially on weekends and holidays during the summer and fall.

5.0 IMPACT OF PROJECT ON EXISTING FACILITIES

The Dark Day Boat Launching Facility has been open to the public since the completion of New Bullards Bar Reservoir in 1969. Some boat launchings occur year round at Dark Day, however, the typical boating season extends from about early May through mid October. The heaviest use of the ramp, when most parking problems occur, is on weekends and holidays from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Based on use of the boat launching facility and parking area as monitored by the Forest Service, recreational use has steadily and significantly increased. Data available, starting in 1987, shows approximately 7,000 recreation visitor days (RVDS = a use convention defined as one person conducting an activity for 12 hours) in 1987 at the Dark Day Boat Launching Facility, while 1998 saw approximately 12, 500 RVDS. The 1992 season records the highest use at Dark Day Launching Facility of approximately 15,500 RVDS.

The existing parking area at the Dark Day Boat Launching Facility consistently exceeds capacity on weekends and holidays between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The following table displays the number of weekends between these dates that parking capacity is exceeded and the average use on weekends for the season for the past three years:

Table 5.1 Existing Dark Day Boat Launching Facility Parking data (existing capacity 60 vehicle-trailer and 40 vehicle parking spaces).

# weekends between Memorial & Labor Days	# weekends use exceeded capacity 1996	# weekends use exceeded capacity 1997	# weekends use exceeded capacity 1998	Average weekend use % of capacity 1996-1998
15	15	12	13	134%

The insufficient parking problem creates other problems in the Dark Day area. For example, when the existing parking facility is full, boaters will often utilize parking that is designated for Dark Day camper?

and day users. Safety is also a concern, as boaters will park along the winding, narrow Dark Day entrance road. This situation can block access for emergency vehicles and is unsafe for pedestrians walking back to the reservoir after parking their vehicle.

During drought years when other popular lakes in the region are low, for example Folsom Lake in 1995 and 1996, New Bullards Bar Reservoir sees significantly more use. In fact during 1995 and 1996 the Dark Day Boat Launching Facility was typically closed at about mid day due to insufficient parking availability on weekends and holidays during the normal boating season.

5.1 Customer Survey Results

A comprehensive recreation resource study was conducted for New Bullards Bar Reservoir to develop the Revised Exhibit R (Recreation Plan required under FERC No. 2246), approved February 4, 1991. This study utilized customer use surveys in its development, and describes three major user groups' (boat fishing, water skiing, and pleasure boating) perception of the crowdedness related to boat ramps:

"While recreation users indicated that they felt crowded while pursuing their primary activity, the questions regarding sense of crowdedness on the reservoir surface and shoreline failed to indicate where users were feeling crowded. However, a review of user comments indicates a large number of recreationists at New Bullards Bar Reservoir feel crowded at the boat ramps and day use parking facilities. This is further supported by the high occupancy levels consistently recorded at the boat ramps during the recreation season. "

To address this problem the 1991 Revised Exhibit R calls for new parking areas be developed at both the reservoir's launching facilities. At the Dark Day Boat Launching Facility the Plan calls for approximately 240 additional parking units (a parking unit defines a vehicle with trailer parking space as two units), given the condition that all project lands are cost effective and appropriate for development of parking facilities. This Project would add 125 new parking units in an area that is appropriate and cost effective. The size of the proposed Project was limited by topographic limitations.

The 1991 Revised Exhibit R established an estimated social carrying capacity for New Bullards Bar Reservoir at 420 Boats At One Time (BAOT) based on extensive analysis and public participation. The proposed Project would not result in exceeding the capacity of the reservoir's surface social capacity.

5.2 Affect on Other Boat Launching Facilities

Adding a parking area to increase the parking capacity at the Dark Day Boat Launching Facility by 71 spaces (54 vehicles with trailers and 17 individual vehicle spaces) is not expected to have any impact on other boating areas described in section 1.0.